

Message Text

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION PORTER REMARKS

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL ENTITLED "THEY TOOK BACK NOT A WORD"
APPEARED OTTAWA JOURNAL DECEMBER 19:

BEGIN QUOTE: HOW CONVENIENT FOR PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU
TO HIDE BEHIND DIPLOMATIC NICETIES. PRESIDENT FORD ISSUES A
STATEMENT IN WASHINGTON SAYING THAT HE AND MR. TRUDEAU "HAVE
A LONG-STANDING PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP" AND "OUR TWO COUNTRIES
HAVE A LONG-STANDING CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP."
HENRY KISSINGER ASSURES ALLAN MACEACHEN IN PARIS HE DIDN'T
AUTHORIZE THE REMARKS OF U.S. AMBASSADOR WILLIAM PORTER AND
THAT U.S.-CANADIAN RELATIONS ARE "EXCELLENT.."

THIS IS THE THIN STUFF WHICH APPARENTLY GIVES MR. TRUDEAU
AID AND COMFORT, AND ENABLES HIM TO MAINTAIN IN THE COMMONS
THAT HIS BOORISH, HEAVY-HANDED ATTACK ON MR. PORTER WAS
JUSTIFIED.

WELL, IT DOESN'T WORK. IN FACT NEITHER MR. FORD NOR
MR. KISSINGER TOOK BACK A WORD THAT MR. PORTER UTTERED.
BOTH MEN WERE CAREFUL TO ADD COVERING QUALIFICATIONS WHICH
GAVE SUPPORT TO WHAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD SAID. MR. FORD
AUTHORIZED HIS PRESS SECRETARY TO SAY: "IN ANY RELATIONSHIP
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BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED THERE ARE BOUND

TO BE DIFFERENCES THAT ARISE IN CERTAIN AREAS." MR. KISSINGER'S JOINT STATEMENT WITH MR. MACEACHEN SPOKE OF "THE INEVITABLE ECONOMIC STRAINS THAT ARISE FROM TIME TO TIME BETWEEN THESE TWO MAJOR ECONOMIES."

THESE STATEMENTS ARE, OF COURSE, ALSO PLATITUDES. BUT THEY ARE PLATITUDES WHICH COVER THE EXISTENCE OF PRECISELY THE KIND OF PROBLEMS ABOUT WHICH MR. PORTER HAD BEEN TALKING SOME TRUTHS.

THE IMMENSE USEFULNESS OF MR. PORTER'S COMMENTS WAS THAT THEY WENT BEYOND THE PLATITUDES, BEYOND THE TACKY RHETORIC ABOUT UNDEFENDED BORDERS AND GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS WHICH BORE AND EVEN INSULT MANY CANADIANS. DIPLOMACY SHOULD BE BIG ENOUGH, CANADIANS AND AMERICANS SHOULD BE CANDID ENOUGH, TO FACE PROBLEMS OF SUBSTANCE WITHOUT EITHER SIDE GOING OFF IN A SNIT.

BUT MR. TRUDEAU, SMALL MAN, HAD TO HAVE HIS PUBLIC SNIT, AND THEN COMPOUND HIS BAD JUDGMENT BY BRAZENLY IMPOSING THE GOODWILL OF MR. FORD AND MR. KISSINGER IN DRAGGING FROM THEM PROPITIATORY STATEMENTS. IT WAS A SORRY, EMBARRASSING PERFORMANCE.

MR. TRUDEAU TAKES CANADIANS FOR SIMPLETONS IF HE THINKS THAT ANYONE READ EITHER MR. FORD'S OR MR. KISSINGER'S REMARKS AS A VINDICATION OF HIS OWN VERBAL INTemperance.

THE IRONY OF COURSE IS THAT MR. TRUDEAU IS SUPPOSED TO BE AN ADVOCATE OF PUBLIC DIALOGUE. HIS GOVERNMENT HAS MADE THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS INTO AN ART FORM. BUT WHEN MR. PORTER IN A FRIENDLY AND ENTIRELY PROPER MANNER PROVIDES AN INSIGHT INTO THE STATE OF CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS, THE FIRST THING MR. TRUDEAU DOES IS FLY OFF THE HANDLE. THE EXCESSIVENESS OF HIS OWN REACTION (THE GRATUITOUS AND INSULTING COMMENT THAT CANADA WAS NOT A COLONY OF THE UNITED STATES) GIVES AN OFFICIAL SANCTION TO A LATENT, DESTRUCTIVE ANTI-AMERICANISM.

A PRUDENT MAN WOULD HAVE ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO THE SUB-
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STANCE OF WHAT MR. PORTER HAD SAID. A WISER MAN WOULD HAVE PROCEEDED TO DETERMINE IF THERE WAS VALIDITY TO THE CONCERNS MR. PORTER EXPRESSED. A LARGER MAN WOULD NOT HAVE PULLED RANK OR TRIED TO DISCREDIT PUBLICLY AN HONEST AMBASSADOR. MR. TRUDEAU WAS NEITHER PRUDENT, WISE NOR LARGE.

THE WAY IN WHICH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS CAREFUL NOT TO REPUDIATE A WORD MR. PORTER SAID WAS IN FACT

MUCH MORE ELOQUENT THAN ANY OF THE PRO FORMA DIPLOMATIC
CLICHES WHICH MR. FORD AND MR. KISSINGER FELT
COMPELLED TO UTTER. END QUOTE. PORTER

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